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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
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Last I looked, I'm still in New England. Tornadoes are rare in these parts, especially near the coast! However, in a small town just north of Boston, a tornado hit the area. Fortunately, there were no casualties, but there were a number of injuries. A lot of damage was quite obvious, as I watched a number of news reports. Very scary!

So, while we endure more thunderstorms tonight (and more forecast for the weekend!), let's try and stay dry and out of the severe weather; and move into this week's issue!

Until next time...

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->In This Week's Gaming Section   - Xbox Unveiled in China!
    " " " " " " " " " " " " " " PSN Breach Settlement!
                                Atari: Game Over Trailer!
                                And more!
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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## Microsoft Unveils Xbox in China As It Faces Probe

Microsoft on Wednesday unveiled its Xbox game console in China, the first to enter the market after an official ban 14 years ago, even as it faces a Chinese government probe over business practices.

Microsoft is ready to attack China with an exclusive Xbox One deal BGR News  
China's State Administration for Industry and Commerce said Tuesday it was

investigating the US technology firm for "monopoly actions" related to its flagship Windows operating system and Office suite of software.

The day after the announcement of the investigation, Microsoft introduced its newest Xbox One model to the potentially vast Chinese market ahead of the official sales launch, which a company representative said would be September 23.

"We are deeply committed to deliver the very best games and entertainment experience for fans in China," Yusuf Mehdi, chief marketing and strategy officer for Xbox, told reporters at an event billed as a chance to "experience" the Xbox.

The slick presentation at the Shanghai Film Museum included Xbox games projected onto a big screen on a darkened stage with deafening sound effects for a crowd of 100 journalists and game developers.

Xbox signs were prominently displayed but Microsoft's coloured square logo was conspicuously absent.

Microsoft said earlier on Wednesday that it seeks to comply with Chinese law.

The Xbox One is the first gaming console available for purchase in China through authorised sales channels since 2000. Illegal machines, smuggled into the country, are widely available from online vendors and electronics markets.

China last year set up the country's first free-trade zone (FTZ) in Shanghai as a test bed for economic reforms, among them allowing foreign firms to manufacture game consoles for sale into the domestic market after passing authorities' inspections.

The move has opened up the market to the likes of Microsoft, as well as Sony's PlayStation and Nintendo's Wii.

Analysts said Microsoft was targeting high-end users in China with the Xbox One, but the price - from 3,699 yuan (\$600), 50 percent more than the basic \$400 US package - might prevent it from reaching a wider market.

"It might need a shift in its strategy if it wants to achieve bigger sales volume after selling to its niche group of users," said Xue Yongfeng, an analyst with consultancy Analysys International.

The government investigation was unlikely to have significant impact on sales among indifferent gamers, he said.

"For its core users, the impact won't be particularly big as users who buy their products don't particularly care about this anti-monopoly investigation," he told AFP.

Microsoft is in the process of setting up a facility to assemble the Xbox in one part of the FTZ at Shanghai's Pudong airport. It is cooperating with China's BestTV New Media, a subsidiary of Shanghai Media Group.

It has enlisted powerful partners to help sell the Xbox in China, including one of the country's top telecom companies and JD.com, the Chinese equivalent of Amazon.

JD.com has already started taking pre-orders through WeChat - China's most popular instant messaging platform - and will accept website pre-orders from Thursday, according to the company.

China Telecom also said it will offer the Xbox through its sales channels from September.

#### Sony Agrees To Offer Free Game or PS+ Subscription as Part of PSN Breach Settlement

A Sony rep sent an email to Game Informer with the company's response to the settlement:

A proposed settlement has been reached in the class action lawsuits arising from the April 2011 criminal cyber-attacks on the PlayStation Network, Qriocity, and Sony Online Entertainment services. Information regarding the proposed settlement, which is subject to final approval by the Court, is available in the settlement agreement and other documents filed with the Court. While we continue to deny the allegations in the class action lawsuits, most of which had been previously dismissed by the trial court, we decided to move forward with a settlement to avoid the costs associated with lengthy litigation. To date, the Sony entities have received no confirmed reports of identity theft linked to the attacks, and there is no evidence that anyone's credit card information was accessed. We are glad that the parties are working toward a resolution of this matter and that our gamers will continue to enjoy our entertainment services.

It may have taken place back in April 2011, but Sony is still dealing with the PlayStation Network's lengthy shutdown, with the company now agreeing to a \$15 million preliminary settlement in a class action lawsuit due to the security breach of 77 million accounts.

As a result of this preliminary settlement, Sony will be offering those who participated in the Welcome Back program a choice of one free PlayStation 3 or PlayStation Portable game, 3 free themes, or a 3-month PlayStation Plus subscription (provided you aren't a PS+ member already).

For those of you who didn't participate in the Welcome Back program, Sony will be honoring claims on a first-come, first-serve basis, with a cap of up to \$6 million. You'll then be able to choose two separate benefit options or two instances of one PSN benefit option.

However, this settlement appears to only be eligible for those in the United States, with the final hearing where a judge will assess the reasonableness of the outcome not scheduled until May 1, 2015. So, nothing will go into effect until May of next year at the earliest, provided a judge signs off on it.

If the settlement does go through, this is an example of the letter you can expect to see:

If You Had a PlayStation Network, Qriocity, or Sony Online Entertainment Account Before May 15, 2011, You Could Get Benefits from a Class Action Settlement.

A settlement has been reached with the Sony Entities in a class action

lawsuit about the illegal and unauthorized attacks (the Intrusions ) in April of 2011, on the computer network systems used to provide PlayStation Network ( PSN ), Qriocity, and Sony Online Entertainment ( SOE ) services.

The Sony Entities deny any claims of wrongdoing in this case, and the settlement does not mean that the Sony Entities violated any laws or did anything wrong.

The Class includes everyone in the US who had a PSN account, a Qriocity account, or an SOE account at any time before May 15, 2011.

There are various benefits, depending in part on what type of account(s) you had. Benefits you could get (if you qualify) include:

Payment equal to paid wallet balances (if \$2 or more) in PSN or SOE accounts that have been inactive since the Intrusions, One or more of the following: a free PS3 or PSP game, 3 free PS3 themes, or a free 3-month subscription to PlayStation Plus (once valid claims exceed \$10 million, class members will still be eligible for one free month of PlayStation Plus), A free month of Music Unlimited for Qriocity accountholders who did not have a PSN account, \$4.50 in SOE Station Cash (amounts will be reduced proportionally if valid claims exceed \$4 million).

Identity Theft Reimbursement: If you had out-of-pocket charges due to actual identity theft, and have documentation proving that the theft was actually caused by the Intrusion(s), you can submit a claim for reimbursement up to \$2,500. Reimbursements will be reduced proportionally if the total amount payable on of all valid claims would exceed \$1 million.

You need to file a claim to be eligible for benefits. Claim forms are available at [WWW.PSNSEOSETTLEMENT.COM](http://WWW.PSNSEOSETTLEMENT.COM) [TREAT WITH CAUTION -Bertie] or by calling 1-800-000-0000. The earliest deadline to file a claim is Month 00, 2014, or 60 days after the settlement becomes final and effective.

Even if you do nothing, you will be bound by the Court's decisions. If you want to keep your right to sue the Sony Entities yourself, you must exclude yourself from the Settlement Class by Month 00, 2014. If you stay in the Settlement Class, you may object to the Settlement by Month 00, 2014. The detailed notice, available at the website or by phone, explains how to exclude yourself or object. The Court will hold a hearing in this case on Month 00, 2014, to consider whether to approve the settlement, and a request by Class Counsel for fees, costs, and expenses up to \$2,750,000. You or your own lawyer may appear and speak at the hearing at your own expense.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online      -      Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Atari: Game Over    Trailer: Digging Up Evidence of E.T.'s Demise

In 1983 Atari dumped a ton of unsold E.T. video game cartridges in a New Mexico landfill. That's a documented fact, but one that is strange enough that it took on the allure of urban legend. Last year a company excavated that landfill as part of a documentary on the fall of Atari and the early 80s video game industry. The results have been seen in photos, but now you can see video, thanks to the Atari: Game Over trailer.

Atari was a pioneering video game company, and the first truly dominant company in the home gaming market thanks to the Atari 2600 console. But by the end of 1982 Atari was fractured into uncooperative divisions, and had failed to follow up the hardware success of its first major console even as clones and competitors arrived on shelves. Third-party games, many of which were sub-par titles, flooded the market.

Making things worse was Atari's own ability to churn out undercooked games, such as the officially licensed Pac-Man home conversion, and most notoriously the licensed E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial game. E.T. was given a scant five weeks of development. Shallowly conceived and over-produced, the title could never hope to sell through its inventory. The game didn't single-handedly kill Atari or the industry, but it was the focal point for many problems, and the poster child for the video game industry crash of 1983.

Atari buried thousands of unsold copies of E.T. in a New Mexico landfill, and a few months ago a group dug up that site as part of a documentary on the company's history. This is the trailer.

Some of this trailer is hopelessly mired in hyperbole. Try to process statements like "The dreams of a generation buried underneath the garbage you can hear it screaming or something" and it's like opening the Ark of the Covenant.

But there's a good story here, about the rise of Atari, and the hubris of the first stage of the video game industry. Hopefully there will be some understanding about how the company's disorganization and seeming dominance contributed to its fall.

Atari: Game Over premieres on Xbox Live this fall.

### Cambridge Museum's Arcade Games Brought Back to Life

Arcade machines kept in the UK Computer Museum are being restored after enthusiasts answered a plea for help.

The museum, based in Cambridge, hopes games such as Space Invaders, Asteroids and Tempest will be brought back to working order for the public to enjoy.

Organiser Phillip Riscombe-Burton used a games fans' forum to call for help to fix the machines, which have been out of use for at least 17 years.

Volunteers found temporary fixes for five of the eight machines, he said.

They will continue to work on the games until they are fully restored.

The museum's arcade games include Centipede, Tempest, Xevious and Alien Syndrome. The museum has 150 working computers, ranging from the 1960s until the modern day.

The collection also includes 13 arcade games from the 1970s to 1990s, eight of which needed fixing.

Mr Riscombe-Burton invited forum members to visit the museum, share knowledge and work on the obsolete machines.

The 29-year-old software engineer, who owns four arcade games, said:  
"Meeting up in person is worth weeks and weeks on the forum.

"With arcade repair, it's always like you get an initial fix and then look at the long-term failures."

Three engineers have taken some of the boards home to continue working on them.

Museum director Jason Fitzpatrick purchased the arcade games from various places including American military bases, and loaned them to the establishment about seven years ago.

"We're not like the average museum," he said.

"You can touch everything and play on everything to see what the computers are like."

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

### Google Under European Regulatory Spotlight

Google Inc faces a variety of challenges from European Commission regulators, in contrast to its experience in the United States where the Internet search company has largely mitigated regulatory threats.

The following are some of the regulatory issues that Google is contending with in Europe:

\*Android - EC regulators have stepped up inquiries into Google's policies regarding its Android mobile operating system, which is used in 80 percent of the world's mobile phones. Regulators appear to be focused on whether Google's mobile policies impede rivals.

\*Search - An EC investigation that began in 2010 seeks to address complaints that Google manipulated its search results to rank its own services higher than competitors. A proposed settlement, under which Google has agreed to display rivals' links more prominently, among other

things, is contested by critics who say it lets Google off too easily.

\*Right to be Forgotten - Google has scrambled to process tens of thousands of requests by individuals who want search-result links to unflattering news articles removed, following a ruling by Europe's top court in May. Regulators criticized Google for restricting its implementation of the ruling to European sites rather than to the broader Google.com website.

\*User data - Italy's data protection regulator gave Google 18 months to change the way it treats and stores user data, a response to Google's controversial move to combine data collected on individual users of its various online services and to consolidate its 60 privacy policies.

\*Taxes - Britain, France and Germany have called for stricter rules to stop companies such as Google, Apple and Amazon aggressively avoiding taxes in austerity-bitten Europe. Google has said it complies with the tax rules of all the countries in which it operates.

### Canada, China Tensions Rise On Cyberattack

Tensions are mounting between China and Canada over Beijing's alleged role in a cyberattack at a Canadian science and technology agency, just as the two countries were looking to smooth relations and organize a bilateral get-together.

On Tuesday, Canada singled out China for blame over an alleged cyberattack at the National Research Council, a federal agency that conducts research and development into technology for eventual commercial use. China initially called the allegations groundless in a statement issued by the Chinese embassy in Ottawa, describing Canada's behavior as neither professional nor responsible.

China's ambassador to Canada, Luo Zhaohui, gave a rare interview with Toronto's Globe and Mail newspaper, in which he challenged the Canadian government to produce the evidence leading Ottawa to publicly shame Beijing. Show me the evidence and then we can do something to investigate, the envoy said in an interview published in the Globe's Friday edition.

A representative at the Chinese embassy in Ottawa didn't make Mr. Luo available for comment and referred a reporter to a statement issued earlier in the week.

The strain in relations over the cyberhacking allegations comes as a Chinese government anticorruption investigation that has targeted dozens of senior officials reaches into Canada. As The Wall Street Journal reported earlier this week, a billion-dollar oil sands deal involving the Canadian subsidiary of state-run China National Petroleum Corp. and Athabasca Oil Corp. is in limbo as the former head of a CNPC Canadian subsidiary has been caught up in the anticorruption probe and another executive has left her post. Both companies said they expect the transaction to close and have declined to comment on the probe.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper now has to juggle the need to attract Chinese capital and boost exports to the world's second-largest economy, while dealing with elements within his Conservative government that remain suspicious of Beijing.



The government is somewhat paralyzed on what they can do with China, said Paul Evans, an international relations professor at the University of British Columbia. Canada still lacks a coherent China strategy, Mr. Evans said, in part because Conservative Party members and a significant element of the Canadian population are skeptical of Beijing.

Polling released in June by the Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada, for instance, indicate 56% of Canadians oppose a trade deal with China; only 35% suggest China is an important market for Canadian growth; and 31% held an unfavorable view of China.

Mr. Harper has given conflicting signals on Chinese investment since taking power. Some Conservative lawmakers in 2012 said they opposed the planned acquisition by Beijing-controlled Cnooc Ltd. of Canada's Nexen Inc. The deal's approval included a curb on future Chinese investment in the oil sands.

The Canadian leader is scheduled to travel to Beijing in November to participate in the leaders' summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group, and Canadian government aides have discussed a possible bilateral meeting between Mr. Harper and Chinese President Xi Jinping. The get-together was seen as a way to soothe worries in China about Canada's appetite for Chinese investment after Mr. Harper's government moved in late 2012 to limit acquisitions of oil sands assets by Chinese state-owned enterprise.

A spokesman for Mr. Harper declined to discuss the status of the Canada-China bilateral, first discussed in March at a nuclear security summit in The Hague, and declined to make an official available for an interview about Canada-Chinese relations.

Instead, a spokeswoman for Canada's foreign department said in an email Canada has a mature and frank dialogue with the Chinese on a variety of levels, without elaborating.

The timing of the blowup over the alleged cyberattack couldn't have been worse, said Fen Osler Hampson, a fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo, Ontario. Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird was in Beijing on Tuesday on a scheduled visit to promote Canada as an economic partner, with a meeting planned with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi. Tuesday was the day Canada publicly identified China as the culprit of cyberattack.

A tentatively news conference in Beijing involving Messrs. Wang and Baird never materialized. An aide to Mr. Baird said the possibility of a joint news conference was discussed but never confirmed.

## Trend Micro Backs Off Google Play Malware Claims

In a recent press release, Trend Micro made a fairly bold claim about malware running rampant in the Google Play Store. The release, dated July 15, 2014, began as follows:

Google Play populated with fake apps, with more than half carrying malware. Potentially evil doppelgangers for the most popular apps are inundating the Google Play store, with many carrying malware, according to a new blog

post and report by Trend Micro, a global developer of cyber security solutions.

In the report more than 77 percent of the top 50 apps on the Google Play store have repackaged or fake apps associated with them. This includes:

100 percent of the apps categorized under Widgets, Media & Video, and Finance

90 percent of the apps categorized under Business, Music & Audio, and Weather

Approximately 70 percent of the apps categorized under Games, Books and Reference, and Live Wallpapers

The Trend Micro blog post points out that creating fake or repackaged apps contribute to the growth of mobile malware. From the post:

Repackaged applications, which are a category of fake applications, play a crucial role in the proliferation of mobile malware. Like fake apps, repackaged apps use social engineering tactics, displaying similar user interface (UI), icon, package names and app labels as the legitimate/official version of the apps they spoofed. This is done to trick users into downloading fake apps and consequently, generating profit.

This is a striking claim, and if true it would have serious security implications for Android users. So, I decided to test Trend Micro's claims.

On every Android device I use, I run Malwarebytes to ensure I'm not using or writing about a malicious app. For this test however, I also installed Trend Micro's Mobile Security And Antivirus.

I opted to test apps from the Widget, Media & Video, and Finance category - seeing as how Trend Micro claims that 100% of those apps have repackaged or fake apps associated with them. After installing five widgets from the top 100, I ran both Malwarebytes and Trend's own software. Neither scanner found a single threat.

I also checked to see if these same widgets had fake versions associated with them. Not one came up with a fake app on the Google Play Store.

So, what's going on here? Is Trend Micro's research wrong? Where my tests inaccurate?

To find out, I contacted HCK Partners (which sent out the press release on behalf of Trend Micro). I shared with them the results of my tests and asked about the company's claims that Google Play was "populated with fake apps" of which "more than half" carry malware and that the Google Play is inundated with "potentially evil doppelgangers for the most popular apps".

In response, they walked back both claims and attempted to clarify the information in the original release:

Our research isn't saying that this problem exists exclusively on Google Play because the majority of these problem apps are available in places other than Google Play. We are now aware that this point wasn't presented in a clear enough manner, and based on that feedback we have updated our blog with the following:

Update as of July 17, 2014, 9:08 A.M. PDT:

Note that the fake apps samples we gathered are from third party sources and none was found in Google Play

The point of our research, in fact, is to highlight the risks around apps found in apps from sources other than Google Play.

Apparently, the individual who wrote this release was more than a little overzealous with their charges of rampant malware in the Google Play Store.

There's a clear disconnect between the subject line of the release, "Google Play populated with fake apps, with more than half carrying malware," and the company's follow-up statement, "Note that the fake apps samples we gathered are from third party sources and none was found in Google Play".

To state that "77 percent of the top 50 apps on the Google Play store have repackaged or fake apps associated with them" is significantly different than saying 77% of Android apps coming from third-party sources contain malware. And even then, a third-party source could easily include the Amazon app store. Claims like these need facts and sources. Where were these fake apps found? Which specific apps were they?

I understand that people make mistakes and companies often make extravagant claims in press releases. But in this day and age, when a single claim from a reputable source can be the thing that sways consumers from one product to another, you better make 100% sure your 100% claim is 100% true before you send it out to the world.

#### Student Launches Global Lawsuit Against Facebook

Austrian law student Max Schrems appealed to a billion Facebook users around the world on Friday to join a class-action lawsuit against Facebook's alleged violations of its users' privacy, stepping up a years-long data-protection campaign.

Schrems, a thorn in Facebook's side who has a case involving the social network pending at the European Court of Justice, has filed a claim at Vienna's commercial court and invited others to join the action at [www.fbclaim.com](http://www.fbclaim.com) using their Facebook login.

Under Austrian law, a group of people may transfer their financial claims to a single person - in this case, Schrems. Legal proceedings are then effectively run as a class action.

Schrems is claiming damages of 500 euros (499.91 pounds) per user for alleged data violations, including aiding the U.S. National Security Agency in running its Prism programme, which mined the personal data of users of Facebook and other web services.

The 26-year-old is also seeking injunctions under EU data-protection law at the court in data-privacy-friendly Austria. Our aim is to make Facebook finally operate lawfully in the area of data protection, he said.

Facebook has come under fire before for allegedly violating

data-protection laws.

Most recently, Britain's data watchdog began investigating whether a 2012 experiment on unwitting users, in which it tried to alter their emotional state to see if their postings turned more positive or negative.

The world's biggest social network, Facebook now has 1.32 billion users. It posted a 61 percent increase in sales in the second quarter thanks to mobile advertising, sending its shares to a record high and valuing the company at almost \$200 billion.

Facebook declined to comment on the Schrems case on Friday.

Users from anywhere outside the United States and Canada may sign up to join the Austrian case, since Facebook runs all its international operations from Ireland, another EU country. The case relies largely on the EU Data Protection Directive. Europe in general has stricter data-protection rules than the United States and considers itself more privacy-conscious.

But its history of enforcing data protection is mixed, bar a few high-profile cases such as the ECJ's ruling in May that compels internet companies to remove irrelevant or excessive personal information from search results.

"We have this habit of pointing the finger at the United States, but we're not enforcing our rights anyway," Schrems told Reuters. "If we can get a class action through like this, it will send out a huge signal to the industry overall."

Schrems has had limited success pursuing cases in Ireland, home to the European or international headquarters of some of the largest U.S. technology companies, including Microsoft and Google, who employ thousands there.

His Europe-v-Facebook group appealed to the Irish High Court to rule on allegations that U.S. companies helped the NSA harvest private data from EU citizens after the Irish data watchdog said there were no grounds for an investigation.

The High Court referred the case to the ECJ.

Schrems's Austrian court case relies on EU law for the alleged data violations, which also include tracking of users on external websites through Facebook's like button and unauthorized sharing of user data with external applications.

The claims for damages will have to be assessed under more financially generous California law, Schrems said, since Facebook says California law governs its terms of service.

A specialist financier will bear the legal costs if Schrems loses the case and will take 20 percent of the damages if he wins, meaning users can join the case at no financial risk.

Schrems himself is not charging a fee but stands to win 500 euros, like the other claimants.

## 10 Facebook Scams You Should Definitely Avoid

Would you like to know just how many people have visited your Facebook page this week, or to be notified when a friend deletes you? How about changing that boring Facebook blue color of your profile would you be interested in that?

Of course you want these things. That's why links to many of the top 10 Facebook scams, shown as article links right in your News Feed, read just like the above.

The digital security company Bitdefender compiled a list of the 10 most common scams on Facebook and shared it with The Guardian. The scams are mostly meta-Facebook clickbait, promising you cool (and fake) services on Facebook, for Facebook.

A couple of notable variations also appear in the roundup: one for a Rihanna sex tape (which doesn't exist), and another for what could be mistaken as free electronics, labeled Unsealed. We are giving them away for free.

Bitdefender says that clicking on these links will typically lead Facebookers to external websites where they'll be asked to download and install nefarious programs. These programs are often viruses or other forms of malware in disguise that could potentially harm your system or, worse, hijack your private information. You do not want to click on any of these links, or download any of these programs, no matter what Facebook goodies they promise.

Ranked by the percentage of fake link clicks each scam has accounted for in the past year, you can view the full top 10 below:

1. Total profile views/visitors (30.20 percent) The scam: An app or software that lets you see either how many views your Facebook profile has received or who has been visiting your profile. This capability does not exist.
2. Change your Facebook Color/Colour (7.38 percent) The scam: Facebook isn't MySpace: You can't change its main colors.
3. Rihanna sex tape with her boyfriend (4.76 percent) The scam: There is no Rihanna sex tape, nor a Rihanna sex DVD, nor a Rihanna MP4 video.
4. Check my status update to get free Facebook T-shirt (4.21 percent) The scam: Free T-shirts, especially those shot via cannon, are awesome. Unfortunately, you probably won't get one via Facebook.
5. Say goodbye to Blue Facebook (2.76 percent) The scam: Again, you are not going to change the hues of your Book.
6. Unsealed. We are giving them away for free (2.41 percent) The scam: Be very wary of any giveaways for free electronics (iPhones, iPads, Beats headphones, and so on) on Facebook. These are generally scams.
7. Check if a friend has deleted you (2.27 percent) The scam: There are extensions and websites that can help you find out who has deleted you on Facebook. But you should probably get that recommendation from a trusted website, and not an easily hacked Facebook friend's page.

8. See your top 10 profile peekers here! (1.74 percent) The scam: You can't see who's been looking at your page. This one is always a scam.
9. Find out how to see who viewed your profile (1.55 percent) The scam: I'll tell you again: You can't.
10. Just changed my Facebook theme. It's amazing (1.50 percent) The scam: Do people really hate Facebook's colors or something? Anyway, still impossible.

By pointing out these bogus, harmful links, Bitdefender is doing a good service for the public. (Though the company is also plugging a Facebook app of its own that will alert you of scams in real time.) With it, you won't have to wait for next year's top 10 list to see if that dubious thing you clicked on that one time was legit or not.

And, of course, if you wish to brave the world of Facebook without Bitdefender's app, and you do spot in your News Feed any of the links in the above list (or something strikingly similar), just remember: We all love Rihanna, but that's no reason to click.

#### Brief Facebook Outage Prompts Complaints on Twitter

A brief Facebook outage on Friday prompted a flurry of complaints and comments on Twitter less than two months after a similar incident affecting users worldwide.

According to the website [downdetector.com](http://downdetector.com), the outage began around 1600 GMT, and appeared to last less than an hour.

"Earlier this morning, some people had trouble accessing Facebook for a short time," the California-based Internet titan said in reply to an AFP inquiry.

"We quickly investigated and are currently restoring service for everyone. We're sorry for the inconvenience."

Facebook had yet to pinpoint a cause, but the trouble appeared to be a technical issue.

During the outage, thousands of users complained they could not access the world's biggest social network.

Similar to the June incident, Facebook users took to Twitter to vent or post sardonic comments, many using the hashtag #facebookdown.

"Facebook is Down?! Oh God! Now How the Hell Am I Going to Find Out How My Friends Feel About Facebook Being Down?!" one user tweeted.

Another wrote "Facebook going down for 15 minutes is proof that today's generation would've survived approximately 8 seconds in the 80s."

A Twitter user with the handle @TheTweetofGod wrote, "#facebookdown. Please remain calm and do not attempt to interact with human beings."

## Facebook Users Dial 911 Over Social Network Outage

Going without the social network prompts people to call 911 only to get a chilly response.

When Facebook crashes, what s a disgruntled user to do? For some, it means calling the authorities, apparently.

Such was the case on Friday morning when the popular social network suffered its second brief outage in two months. Some users in Los Angeles, after getting an error message, called 911, prompting L.A. County Sheriff sergeant Burton Brink to shoot off the following tweet:

According to Sgt. Brink, the Crescenta Valley Station in La Crescenta, Calif. has received several calls from dissatisfied Facebook users seeking a solution, although the exact number of phone-in complaints had not be tallied as of press time.

We get phone calls all the time, whether it be Facebook going down, people getting wrong orders at fast food restaurants, or their cable TV went out, Sgt. Brink told Fortune. But with Facebook in particular, we get calls probably because it s such a widely-used thing. Of his now-viral tweet, Sgt. Brink explains it was largely done to prevent more people from calling about the problem.

That Facebook s FB outage which impacted just some of its users prompted some people to dial 911 in a panic is comical, obviously, but the chain-of-events also speaks to the sheer ubiquity of the social network itself. Since its founding in 2004, Facebook has evolved into the second-most popular Internet destination in the world, with over 1.3 billion users logging in monthly second only to Google.

## Apple Unveils Updated MacBook Pro Notebooks

As anticipated, Apple has boosted both the memory and processing power of its professional laptop range and has also cut the price of its one remaining non-Retina display model.

Now, all models with a Retina display come with double the memory and improved battery life. So for 13-inch models, that means 8 GB instead of 4 GB of RAM as standard and 16 GB in the 15-inch models.

All 13- or 15-inch notebooks also get upgraded to the latest iteration of Intel s Haswell processor, so performance and battery life will also get an upward push.

However, Apple is keeping prices the same. That means that an entry-level 13-inch MacBook Pro with Retina Display will cost \$1,299 with a 2.6 GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 processor with Turbo Boost speeds up to 3.1 GHz, 8 GB of memory, 128 GB of flash storage, and Intel Iris graphics.

For an extra \$700, consumers will be able to snap up a 15-inch MacBook Pro with Retina display boasting 16 GB of memory, 256 GB of flash storage, and Intel Iris Pro graphics.

If the spec bumps weren t sufficiently appealing, Apple has also cut the

price of the flagship 15-inch model which comes with a 2.5 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 processor with Turbo Boost speeds up to 3.7 GHz, 16 GB of memory, 512 GB of flash storage, and Intel Iris Pro and NVIDIA GeForce GT 750M graphics to \$2,499.

People love their MacBook Pro because of the thin and light, aluminum unibody design, beautiful Retina display, all-day battery life and deep integration with OS X, said Philip Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of worldwide marketing. The MacBook Pro with Retina display gets even better with faster processors, more memory, more affordable configurations and a free upgrade to OS X Yosemite this fall.

On Tuesday, the company also confirmed that its last remaining notebook with an optical drive, the 13-inch MacBook Pro, which is slightly thicker than the Retina display models thanks to its CD/DVD combo drive and which has a lower-resolution screen, will remain in production.

Describing it as an attractive option for consumers considering making their initial jump from a PC to a Mac, the laptop has a 2.5 GHz quad-core Intel Core i5 processor with Turbo Boost speeds up to 3.1 GHz and a 500 GB spinning hard drive and while it hasn't had its RAM upgraded (it's stuck on 4 GB), it has had \$100 cut from its price tag. It will now cost just \$1,099.

#### Comcast Revs Up Internet Speeds for Some Customers. Are You Eligible?

What do California, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas all have in common? If you answered "faster Internet speeds for Comcast customers," you'd be correct.

The cable Internet provider announced Friday that nearly all of its residential customers in those four states will be receiving increased Internet speeds.

Comcast said it increased the speed of the three Xfinity Internet tiers that it offers: "Performance" is now 50 Megabits per second (Mbps), up from 25 Mbps; "Blast" is now 105 Mbps instead of 50 Mbps; and "Extreme 105" has increased to 150 Mbps.

"We continue to deliver the fastest speeds to the most homes so our customers can have a terrific online experience," says Eric Schaefer, senior vice president and general manager of data and communications services at Comcast, in a statement.

"Whether it's streaming video, gaming or just surfing the web, customers need an Internet provider that can deliver speed and reliability. Plus, since wireless access is becoming just as important as wired service, we also include complimentary access to Xfinity WiFi with most of our Internet service tiers. We currently offer about 3.6 million hotspots with plans to grow to eight million by the end of the year."

In a statement, Comcast explained that these changes will be phased in for customers over the next few days, though it noted that those who wish to receive "more immediate access" can restart their modem to do so. Comcast will alert customers if they need to upgrade their Comcast hardware to receive the faster Internet speeds.

Currently, Internet providers are feeling the pressure to boost customers'



speeds. Google is currently working to bring high-speed Internet to 34 cities across the US as part of its Google Fiber initiative. According to statistics compiled in December of last year by the international pro-trade group OECD Broadband, the US pales in comparison to other countries when it comes to Internet speeds. In the US, only 7 percent of broadband subscribers use fiber connections, which are reportedly 100 times faster than basic broadband connections. Fiber is used by as many as 30 percent of subscribers in Sweden and as many as 60 percent in countries such as South Korea and Japan, according to the OECD statistics.

This comes at a time when Comcast is trying to buy rival broadband provider Time Warner Cable for a reported \$45.2 billion.

"Together, Comcast and TWC will bring millions of consumers the next-generation of broadband Internet, video, voice, and related technologies," writes David L. Cohen, Comcast executive vice president and chief diversity officer in public policy, in an April statement.

Comcast also upgraded the Internet speed for 14 states and Washington, D.C. back in April, according to PCWorld.

#### Google Scraps Its Mysterious Unused Barge

Once upon a time, Google had a dream. A floating dream. They wanted a showroom at sea, housed in a large barge. Unfortunately, this plan never got off the ground (or, um, sea) and now the Google Barge that never was is headed off to a sad fate: the scrap yard.

The barge is four-stories high, made of 63 shipping containers. It was built in Connecticut before heading across the nation to the West Coast. A similar barge also appeared in San Francisco last year. Google said the barges would be "an interactive space where people can learn about new technology." The barge was supposed to head to New York after, where the technorati could check out different gadgets within it.

But the barge was never finished, and the project was essentially abandoned, though Google has not disclosed any reason why or provided further details about the project.

The barge has been sitting in the Portland harbor since last year. This week, it was moved to Turner's Island Cargo Terminal in South Portland. There, it will be taken apart. Lance Hanna, the deputy harbor master at Portland Harbor, told the Portland Press Herald the 63 containers would be taken apart and sent to be scrapped.

On the bright side, the city of Portland earned \$400,000 in property taxes from the docked barge that did nothing.

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